

From: Carrie Vibert March 16, 2012 10:10:37 AM
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To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

DESIGN REVIEW BOARD MINUTES
FEBRUARY 28, 2012
REGULAR MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman, called the Design Review Board meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Anthony Drapelick, Rick Schoenhardt, William Gardner, Kevin E. Gray, Charles Stephenson, Rita Bond, and John Stewart; Mark Naccarato joined the meeting at 5:35 p.m. Also in attendance were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning, Janis Prifti, Clerk, and other interested parties.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist invited Commissioner Drapelick, who remains an alternate member, to participate in the discussion and voting.

III. PRESENTATION(s), DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE

a. Application of Benny Gjonbazaj, Agent for Southmeadow Associates LLC, for a patio and fabric awning over the existing entrance as well as the new patio on the property located at 562 Hopmeadow Street (Map G12, Block 132, Lot 036) B-1 zone.

Mr. Gjonbazaj has a pizza restaurant at 562 Hopmeadow and proposed adding to the south side of the building a small covered deck with side railings and metal posts with red umbrella tables for self-serve patron dining. He has operated the business for 5 months and the location and size are the same as before; the black rounded metal posts have framing to match the front railings; the deck will use pressure treated wood; the umbrella tables replace the former picnic tables with 40 feet of space for this design on the south side of the building; and there will be a handicapped ramp. Mr. Peck stated there is no site plan or survey available; and regarding whether setbacks are proper, Howard Beach is comfortable that they are. He said the driveway will be just for entering and exiting with

parking continuing in the front and rear of the building. He provided samples of the dark red awning material and said there will be no writing on the awning and the supports will be black to match the railing. Mr. Gjonbazaj said the restaurant currently looks like a box and he would like it to look as nice outside as it now does inside. The Commissioners agreed this plan is attractive and will enhance the neighborhood. Chairman Dahlquist suggested he consider alternatives to pressure treated lumber which tends to split and crack. Mr. Gjonbazaj said he could use Trax or composite flooring; Commissioner Stephenson stated it would be to his advantage in long-term maintenance.

Commissioner Gray asked if there would be a wall sign on the south side of the building. Mr. Peck said he would work the signage out with the Applicant, who would like to have a sign if possible, and Mr. Gjonbazaj plans to return to the DRB for sign approval in 2 weeks; he has taken down the neon sign that was there. Mr. Peck said the current sign is the same size as the previous sign and is a nice quality.

Commissioner Bond asked whether there will be any additional exterior lighting. Mr. Gjonbazaj stated there are tenants in the building upper level so lighting is in place with no additional lighting planned.

Chairman Dahlquist reiterated the only major comment relates to changing the decking material to pressure treated composite; and commented the matching awnings will look nice. Mr. Gjonbazaj said he will coordinate the decking color to enhance overall design.

Commissioner Gray made a motion that the Design Review Board finds this application generally consistent with the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval subject to the following modifications:

- 1) That the Applicant change the decking material from pressure treated to composite; and
- 2) That it is our understanding the signage on the south side of the building is not part of this Application at this time.

Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

IV. INFORMAL PRESENTATION(S)

a. Informal presentation by The Keystone Companies LLC regarding material selection for the initial medical office building at Dorset Crossing

Mr. Giorgio stated that in their last appearance before DRB, they requested

a modification of the site plan and DRB approved construction of two 15,000 sq. ft. buildings replacing a 30,000 sq. ft. building. He said the drawings go back to 2009 with original approval in the 2006-07 timeframe and at the time the Zoning and Planning Commissions approved the site plan, it had 2 buildings with 2 footprints with a 20,000 sq. ft. and 30,000 sq. ft. building and 2 pads. He said as the plan developed, St. Francis wanted to change the site plan and it was amended and approved in 2009 for two 15,000 sq. ft. buildings in place of the 30,000 sq. ft. building. He said it was his recollection they would return to DRB once materials, lighting, and signage plans were developed.

Chairman Dahlquist stated the Applicant's last visit to DRB was in 2009; a site plan amendment was subsequently obtained from Zoning in 2010 with Mr. Elliot stating Zoning approval should be conditioned on DRB being satisfied. He said the Zoning minutes stated Mr. Giorgio would return to DRB with ample opportunities for discussion. He said Mr. Giorgio did not return until this meeting and only to discuss materials. Mr. Giorgio stated his recollection they did come back, and agreed DRB has not yet seen the material. Commissioner Schoenhardt asked how the modification works with a master plan for the rest of the site for housing, etc. Mr. Giorgio said there is a master plan for the 50 acres with original approvals for 20 acres changed to B-3 and the remaining 30 acres left I-3; the original master plan approved 36 residential units, 90,000 sq. ft. of medical or office, and 20,000 sq. ft. of retail. He said when they returned to amend the site plan the only change and approval was to replace the 30,000 sq. ft. building with two 15,000 sq. ft. buildings. He said Zoning approved the modification and one building is essentially framed.

Commissioner Schoenhardt offered his opinion that the buildings being constructed appear boring and unarchitectural in terms of shape and character and something of a disaster; but if approval has already been obtained, in lieu of DRB having the opportunity to comment on architectural design, DRB review will be restricted to commenting on materials. Commissioner Stephenson stated DRB are advisors to the Zoning Board and this is a process problem; on 10/17/11, Mr. Giorgio addressed Zoning with no challenge as simply an update. Commissioner Naccarato said having not been part of the process to arrive at this design, it is difficult for DRB to come in at the end to mitigate a solution. The Commissioners agreed there did not need to be a motion for this informal presentation and expressed interest in hearing about the materials.

Mr. Giorgio felt he had a responsibility to come back to DRB and present materials, lighting and signage packages. He said they knew what the materials were going to be for the initial two buildings and would like to get DRB's opinion. Chairman Dahlquist stated DRB would like to see the materials. Mr. Giorgio introduced Tom Arcari, the Architect, and his

associate, Chris Millard, and Site Engineer, David Zyack. Mr. Arcari said the 15,000 sq. ft. single-story wood frame building is proposed to be clad in vinyl siding with one base color and two accent colors; the roof will be a 30-year architectural shingle; there is a cupola with a standing seam roof; windows will be fully welded vinyl; all of the trim on the building will be PVC custom-manufactured seamless with concealed fasteners. He showed samples of the siding, which is a dual left 4-inch vinyl product in slate gray with two accents in vinyl shake with dark accent at the front gable and lighter accent at the upper portion of the back end gable, where ultimately there will be a signage package that will come before the Town. He provided a sample of the skirt board trim manufactured by Trim Solutions, which is pre-routed with concealed J's built in; the same goes for the continuous crown running along the roof edge length of the building; the corner boards are similar with back piece fastened to the building and all fasteners covered. He said there is a recessed profile trim at the building corners and at entrances and at the gables there is a flat corner trim with no recess review. He said the window trims are similar and pre-manufactured in one piece, built to be integral with the fully welded vinyl constructed window. He showed a Pulte fully-welded vinyl window assembly with integral nailing flange and a grill between the glass pattern; it is a market standard product. He showed a small piece of the asphalt architectural timberline weathered wood look shingle and stated there will be a small outstanding seam at the cupola which will be copper. He said the shutters will be black vinyl and fastened to the building.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that in the 2009 presentation, DRB was told all the mechanical equipment would be hidden and asked whether for this building configuration it would be visible. Mr. Arcari said there is flat area in the middle of the roof on the back side - it is a cutout in the roof and the mechanicals sit there and are shielded by the front gable. Mr. Zyack said it is about 30 feet from each gable to the flat area with the elevation at Rte. 10 at 6 feet increasing to 25 feet at the rear of the building. Mr. Giorgio said the mechanicals might be visible at the intersection but they are keeping the pine tree, which will shelter much of what is seen coming south; he said they will be back to show DRB the ultimate site plan and they will be planting or fencing along that line depending on the road elevation, but it will be visible at that point. Mr. Arcari said the gradient starts at 6 feet and rises significantly by the back of the 230-foot long building.

Commissioner Stewart said there has been a lot of discussion about the northern gateway to Simsbury and issues with previous applicants' proposed plans and this is an unfortunate architectural solution. Commissioner Drapelick added this was proposed to be like Dorset Village in England and is more like a military barracks. Mr. Giorgio said of the 5 buildings, the two in front will be one story and the one in back will be two stories;

they agreed to have no building footprint larger than 25,000 sq. ft. and are living within the constraints of this 8 acre site and the market; once landscaping is done, he believes it will not be an embarrassment. Commissioner Stewart said they appreciate the constraints of the site and market, but a 230 foot long building with a single gable could have been softened architecturally to break down the scale and to add character.

Mr. Giorgio said the lighting package they are using is a black fixture within the site and also along Dorset Crossing Road was specified by the Town, as worked out with CL&P, and are all dark sky metal halide lights.

Chairman Dahlquist invited them to return once they have initial plans for the other buildings on the site. Mr. Giorgio said the only commitment to date regarding materials is that these first two buildings should appear as sister buildings; the developers of the remaining buildings will have their own ideas and they will come back to DRB at that time.

Commissioner Gray asked if the entire parking lot will be built out. Mr. Giorgio said they will build sufficient parking only for this building with the rest of the land seeded; it will not all be built out at this time. Commissioner Gray asked if Dorset Crossing is a private or Town road in the future. Mr. Giorgio said with the new trans-sector road, the intent is that it be a Town road intersecting that road running from the corner to Hoskins; they have gone to considerable expense to re-design the site plan to accommodate the right of way and still develop the parcel and will return with that plan. Chairman Dahlquist stated there is no comment DRB can make at this point, but would appreciate the opportunity to comment at the initial concept stage on future buildings.

b. Informal presentation by Ron Janeczko and Chris Nelson regarding the proposed Pond House at Hop Brook on West Street, PAD Zone.

Mr. Janeczko offered the good news that they will be able to reuse genuine Simsbury brownstone they are chiseling out of the ground at the old Mill Building. He said Chris Nelson has found a company that takes a boulder, puts it on its flattest largest side, cuts it with a diamond saw, flips it and takes the next biggest piece so they end up with many thin pieces of brownstone. He said it is nonstructural and they have plenty of it and will be using brownstone on all of their buildings, which was a nice surprise; it is the same material as in the old Mill Building. He said they have a restaurant tenant who will announce soon and they are working inside the building removing wood applied in the 80's, revising bathrooms to be ADA compliant, etc.. He said as they worked with the restaurant people, one conflict came up - the idea of the PAD is to have complimentary, not competing, uses and to have offices during the day and the restaurant at night, so the restaurant has use of the parking spaces.

However, with the residential amenity package, if there is a group doing yoga or a book club at the Mill, there may be 20 people from the apartments parked there. He said the restaurant people see it as a conflict because they want the parking spaces, so they looked at the site plan to see where they might replicate the 2 uses of a small exercise room and great room.

Mr. Janeczko said they reviewed the site plan, which includes Grist Mill Road, the Mill Building, Linear Park, the grand entrance to the apartment development with its mail center, the pond where they will clean up invasive species, and immediately on the right a 20-30 foot observation platform positioned over the water's edge, and a patio grilling area. He stated all of the area is disturbed - they will remove invasive species and put in a retaining wall as part of the drainage plan, grade, plant, and put in sidewalks - there are apartment buildings throughout, a Town Green area, trash and recycling areas, and a maintenance building in back of Parcel 20. He worked with their architect, Jack Kemper, to develop a small-scale structure in the 100% disturbed area of about 1100 sq. ft., which is larger than the current gatehouse, in a lake cottage style with windows oriented toward the pond and the same floor plan they had at the Mill building, including an exercise room and great room. He said the design maintains about half the deck area with observation area and grill, kitchenette, ADA compliant bathroom, 2nd bathroom, and 10x10 mini-office for the re-leasing agent's locked files. He stated a goal to encourage residents to come to the Mill, enjoy the restaurant, utilize the real estate office with UPS and FEDEX drops - this will be a 7-day office with receptionist/concierge. He said initial lease up will take place here until the apartments are 100% occupied and re-leasing maintained here for turnover. He stated they may call them Gatehouse units and parking will be exclusive to residents, with room for 6 extra guest parking spaces, and about 32 feet paved, including 1 for handicapped. He said each unit has their own parking spaces and private garage, so these spaces could be for "Pond House Parking Only"; another 4 spaces are nearby and others at the Village Green.

Mr. Janeczko said, with the exception of the added stone, the materials are as previously shown for pavers, weathered wood roofing, and a pallet of siding colors appropriate for the stone and roof color. He showed a layout of the observation area. Chairman Dahlquist commented that introducing a smaller building to break up the larger buildings is positive. Mr. Janeczko said they will use the veneered stone on the entrance columns, depending on what the mason recommends; they have retaining wall chunks - at the cul-de-sac there is a dry-laid retaining wall of uniform-sized pieces of brownstone they are saving and may dry lay it or frame and lay it; they will use Simsbury brownstone for every application of stone.

Mr. Nelson said the brownstone cutting is being done by someone who previously worked for a big stone cutting company in Brookfield, CT, who

bought some massive saws; Thinstone is a brand name and this is the same kind of equipment, with one smooth side and one rough; even with the shipping, the cost is close to that of artificial products. He said the deeper in the ground the stone, the less weathered and the harder the stone is - stone that is too porous is not desirable. Mr. Janeczko said they may decide to cut the stone thicker for certain areas.

Regarding their construction schedule, Mr. Nelson said they will apply for permits within the next 30 days, beginning with construction of the units in 12-15 months and the condos in about 18 months. He said first they plan to get the Mill and restaurant running. Regarding the Gatehouse, Mr. Peck said because it's a PAD, the change to the site plan has to be adopted by Zoning and he will discuss with the Town Attorney whether it has to go to Public Hearing.

Commissioner Schoenhardt made a motion to change this from informal to a formal Application. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Gardner, and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion for referral to the Zoning Commission that the Design Review Board finds the Application to be substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design and recommends approval as presented on Drawings attached to cover letter dated February 24, 2012, addressed to Hiram Peck, Town Planner, regarding Gristmill Commons Apartments' conversion of pond side deck and grilling area to into club house structure. Commissioner Stewart seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Chairman Dahlquist made a design consideration that the conversion from an informal to a formal review is based on information provided and the understanding that materials to be used are a continuation of other materials on site, such as natural stone, siding and roofing material; DRB finds this project will enhance the overall project in very positive ways.

Regarding the restaurant, Mr. Janeczko said it is currently planned as a 3-level restaurant but compressed in terms of useage; they will maintain a strong role in managing the space so there will not generally be two private rooms at the same time, unless it is not busy. He said the whole building at 75 will be offices and they will occupy the main level with another single tenant desired.

V. DISCUSSION

a. Projects and Tasks for 2012

None.

b. Update on Town Center Guidelines

Mr. Peck said he has received the updated Town Code draft and will send it out for comment. Noré Winter will be on the East Coast and will come to Simsbury on the 8th for discussions and will still make the 2 planned trips.

c. Budget Discussion

Mr. Peck said, regarding last night's budget discussion and the goal of creating village districts for Tariffville, Weatogue, and West Simsbury, the request for \$15,000, which was cut out by the First of Selectmen, was put back in by the full Board. Also, he said the \$50,000 for a marketing study, requested by the Economic Development Commission to take the information developed in the last 5 years and determine how it will be implemented, was also put back in the budget. He said a total of \$67,500 is currently back in the budget and they will see what happens.

VI. CORRESPONDENCE

None.

VII. STAFF REPORTS

Mr. Peck said Tom Evans went to a ZBA meeting for a variance because of the distance of his driveway from the property line as he reduced the driveway width. Also, he said Mr. Evans would like to rebuild the barn falling down on the site and actually remove it from the neighbor's property; the neighbor came to the hearing and spoke against it, saying that if it can be moved, it should be moved to conform. Mr. Peck said the rebuild looked nice, but putting the barn in the middle of the property doesn't work, and the variance was denied. He added the variance for the driveway setback was also denied, as the driveway must be wide enough for cars to enter and exit. He said much depends on who presents a request and how it is presented and it will probably not go back to Zoning until these issues are resolved. Mr. Peck confirmed that Mr. Evans could just rebuild the barn where it is, but it may not be the best option with compromise needed.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of February 14, 2012

The February 14, 2012, minutes were amended on Line 72 to change "Griganti" to "Brighenti"; and on Line 238 "Commissioner Gardner" made the motion to adjourn and "Commissioner Gray" seconded the motion. Commissioner Gardner made a motion to approve the February 14, 2012, minutes, as amended. Commissioner Gray seconded the motion, and it was passed with Commissioners

Drapelick and Stewart abstaining.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Gray made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:55 p.m.
Commissioner Naccarato seconded the motion, and it was passed unanimously.

Emil Dahlquist, Chairman